

# **FISHING TOURNAMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FTAC)**

AUGUST 28, 2004. 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.  
BEST WESTERN ROYALE, STEVENS POINT, WI

## MEETING NOTES

### *Attendees:*

#### FTAC Members

Robert Selk, Trout Unlimited  
Steve Winters, Smallmouth Bass Alliance  
Louis Kowieski, Great Lakes Sport Fishing Federation  
Dave Blank, Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus  
Mark Solestke, N.E.W. BASS  
Steven Lindahl, Ranger Boats  
Ted Lind, Wisconsin Council of Sport Fishing Organizations  
John Ashenbrenner, Wisconsin Conservation Congress  
Bob Miller, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation  
Chuck Rolfsmeyer, BASS Federation, Inc.  
Mike Hofmann, Wisconsin BASS Federation  
Bob Neidhold, Muskies, Inc.  
Jim Schommer, Walleyes for Tomorrow  
Brett Stapelmann, Wisconsin Bowfishing Association  
Ryan Richards, Wisconsin Sports Development Corporation  
Michelle Killburn, Mercury Marine  
Bob Munsen, Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin

#### WDNR

Patrick Schmalz, Madison  
Steve Hewett, Madison  
Mike Staggs, Madison

#### UW Extension

Kristin Hill, Facilitator

### **I. Welcome and Introductions.**

- A. Kristin Hill, UW Extension, the FTAC meeting facilitator provided some introductory remarks for the group.
- B. The members of the FTAC present introduced themselves, provided some background about themselves, described what brought them to the FTAC, and what types of things they felt they could bring to the FTAC.
- C. In addition, Kristin asked the group to provide what they felt were some good ground rules for how this and subsequent meetings should be conducted.
  1. The following list was generated:
    - Members should be courteous/show courtesy to others.
    - The group should remain focused.
    - The group should have a clear charge/purpose.
    - Individuals should have a positive attitude, an open mind, and listen to others.
    - Members should suspend judgment until an issue has been discussed fully.
    - Interests as well as positions should be expressed by members.
    - The group should try not to 'travel'

### **II. General Information**

- A. Patrick Schmalz, WDNR, FTAC/DNR liaison, provided the group with some introductory comments, thanking the members for participating and emphasizing the importance of their role in the development of fishing tournament regulations for Wisconsin.

1. Schmalz provided a broad overview of 2003 Wisconsin Act 249 (the tournament legislation), and stressed that it is the guiding document in all of tournament rule development, as it provides the specific authorities for tournament rule promulgation. The legislation has 3 major components.
    - a) It provides the DNR with authority to promulgate rules to authorize and regulate fishing tournaments in Wisconsin.
    - b) It requires the DNR to establish a bass fishing tournament pilot program.
    - c) It requires the DNR to appoint an advisory committee made up of tournament organizers, the Conservation Congress, sport fishing organizations, and users of the lakes and streams in Wisconsin.
  - B. Schmalz provided the group with the FTAC charge (created using Act 249).
    1. The FTAC charge includes description of the groups purpose, membership, authority, meetings, and DNR support (see FTAC charge document).
    2. Schmalz explained how membership to the FTAC was selected. Approximately half of the members were selected by their organizations, which were identified by DNR as meeting the criteria set forth in Act 249. The other half were invited by the DNR to participate in order to ensure a broad range interests are represented. Depending on how the group functions, the DNR can modify the group to ensure the FTAC can serve its purpose.
- III. Priorities.
- A. Schmalz provided a handout that showed a timeline for development of live well standards that need to be written into rule for the bass fishing tournament pilot program to begin. Act 249 requires live well standard rules for the pilot program.
  - B. Schmalz explained the bass fishing tournament pilot program to the FTAC, including the sunset date of December 31, 2006, which makes it high priority.
    1. The pilot program requires the DNR to permit 4 bass tournaments per year to cull bass, of which at least 1 will allow participants to cull both LMB and SMB, and all 4 will allow culling of LMB.
    2. Boats used by participants in the 4 pilot program tournaments must be equipped with live wells that meet standards set by the DNR by rule.
    3. Given these circumstances, Schmalz indicated that a recommendation for live well standards from the FTAC was necessary by the end of the meeting.
    4. Schmalz used the opportunity to reiterate that the group must maintain focus on live well standards for the bass fishing tournament pilot program.
  - C. There was discussion about how to deal with public participation in the FTAC meetings, as Schmalz explained that the public are allowed to attend, but that we can limit their participation. In addition, the group decided on consensus as the decision-making process for the FTAC. Kristin clarified that consensus does not always mean 100% support/agreement, but it means that the members can live with the decision.
    1. Louie Kowieski recommended that we only permit comments/participation from the public in writing to be dealt with at another meeting in order to stay focused and on task.

2. Others felt that we should set aside time at the end of each meeting to allow public comments since individuals that attend may have traveled to the meeting, taking time out of their schedule to be there.
3. Prior to resolving the public comment issue, the focus turned to FTAC decision-making.
  - a) Louie suggested that the group operate using Roberts Rules of Order as a way to formalize decision-making and to document how individuals vote (if necessary) on certain issues since they all represent a larger entity (club, organization, etc.).
  - b) Bob Selk felt that consensus was more appropriate, given that we have a facilitator to work the group through the consensus-building process.
  - c) Steve Winters agreed that the FTAC should work for consensus. The facilitator is there to determine when the group cannot reach consensus and call for a vote if necessary and move on.
  - d) Louie disagreed and felt that it was important to vote and have a record of how individual members represent their groups.
  - e) Kristin decided to go around the table and ask each individual their preference for Roberts rules of order vs. consensus. Consensus was supported by all in attendance, except Louie Kowieski.
  - f) Kristin closed the decision-making discussion/decision by stating that the FTAC may want to decide how to put items into official record. The group was comfortable with the minutes as that record and were encouraged to be sure to emphasize to the note-taker when they want to be sure something makes the minutes specifically.
  - g) **DECISION: FTAC will make decisions based on consensus and formalize those decisions in the meeting minutes. In the case that consensus can not be reached (as determined by the facilitator), a vote will be called for and recorded in the minutes.**
4. How to deal with public comments:
  - a) Mike Staggs clarified for the FTAC that the Department wants all view points represented and will be considering all public comments in the rule development process. He also stated that a similar group (the Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum) leaves 15 minutes at the end of each meeting for public comments, giving individuals 2 minutes each.
  - b) Bob Neidhold felt that people should be permitted to speak if they come to the meeting.
  - c) **DECISION: The FTAC will provide sign-up sheets for public attendees to express the desire to comment if they attend the meeting. The comments should be made in writing so that the FTAC has an opportunity to review the comments. In the case that public comments consist of questions requiring a response from the group, the FTAC will defer the response to a subsequent meeting (or provide it in writing). Some flexibility will be built into this system so that the FTAC can decide whether or not to allow time at the meeting for public comments (especially if only 1 or 2 people attend). This can either be done as in agenda repair at a meeting or in developing a meeting agenda.**

IV. The FTAC began discussions of live well standards with Kristin presenting the following questions to the group.

- What are the live well standards supposed to do?
- What has history taught us?
- What can be learned from examples other places?
- What must be addressed?
- What are enforcement considerations?
- What do tournament participants want?

A. Demonstration – Steve Lindahl from Ranger Boats brought a model live well currently used by Ranger and described how it functions for the purpose of showing the group what the current live well technology does.

1. He explained the two pump system, capable of pumping fresh water into the live well from the lake/river and of re-circulating.
2. He explained how live wells are generally designed in the context of the design of the entire boat.
3. There were details of the actual components described (e.g. the pump, live well capacity, water filtration, water temperature).

B. Patrick Schmalz presented a handout to the FTAC with 4 suggestions for live well standards as a starting point for discussions. Those stemmed from research and communications with Gene Gilliland from Oklahoma, who works on bass fishing tournament research and management (can be considered an authority). Those suggestions were:

- The live well must be an integrated part of the boat (e.g. ‘built-in’).
- The live well must be in working condition (e.g. functional/operational) and its operation must be demonstrated prior to fishing in the tournament.
- The live well must be capable of constantly pumping fresh water into the live well.
- The live well must be capable of re-circulating water.

1. Louie Kowieksi suggested that all tournament anglers certify that they meet the standards as they apply.
2. Chuck Rolfsmeyer stated that he had a chance to attend the American Fisheries Society Meeting in Madison where a symposium on black bass mortality was held. He found it informative and commented on some things he thought were most interesting (impact of noise on fish in a live well, and that 54% of tournament anglers do not aerate their live well enough).
3. FTAC discussions immediately centered around setting a minimum volume capacity for live wells. Some felt that we should be conservative and make it relatively large, (based on scientific research 1 gallon of water per pound of bass held is recommended minimum), while others felt that we should not be so stringent as it would lead to many anglers not qualifying due to what type of boat they have.
4. There was discussion regarding why a home made live well (not an integrated part of the boat) could not be used. There was little discussion, but the group felt it was unlikely that one of the pilot program tournaments would have boats with home made

live wells because it was designed to attract larger, professional-type events to the state as an economic benefit.

5. Other discussions ( e.g. aeration, salt, ice) led to questions regarding whether or not the rule should specify how a live well is operated. After much tangential discussion, Mike Staggs suggested that we not specifically write live well operation requirements, but state that the permit may specify those conditions. The group agreed.
6. Michelle Killburn recommended that the group address each of the 4 recommendations from Schmalz and move on rather than getting off track with tangential discussions.
  - a) **Integrated part of the boat (meaning manufactured).** The minimum capacity was revisited. Mike Hofmann and Louie Kowieski recommended 25 gallons, citing that the typical 10 fish (2 person teams) limit would not exceed about 25 lbs. Steve Winters felt we should be more conservative and say 40 gallons. Some felt that was too strict and eventually the group decided on **25 gallons** as a minimum based on the minimum recommended volume and 25 lbs of bass. It was also noted that this is a pilot program and that such rules will be evaluated.
  - b) **The live well should be functioning and that should be demonstrated prior to an angler fishing in the tournament.** The FTAC felt this standard was acceptable.
  - c) **The live well must be capable of constantly pumping fresh water into the live well.** The FTAC felt this standard was acceptable.
  - d) **The live well must be capable of re-circulating water.** The FTAC felt that was acceptable but recommended adding that the live well must be capable of holding and aerating the water as well resulting in **the live well must be capable of holding, re-circulating, and aerating water.** This was deemed important in the case of off-site weigh-ins.
  - e) **Operation of the live well may be specified in the permit conditions.** The FTAC felt this standard was acceptable.
7. Louie Kowieski expressed concerns related to exotic species and requiring chlorine flushes. However, others felt that it was covered under current laws and unnecessary to specify in these rules.

## V. Pilot Program Tournament Selection Criteria

- A. The FTAC began to discuss how to select the 4 tournaments per year that will participate in the pilot program.
  1. Jim Schommer suggested that we establish a ‘size of tournament’ criteria, targeting medium to larger events.
  2. A question was presented regarding the evaluation (e.g. what will be studied) and if that should be considered in selection. Schmalz explained that the specifics of the evaluation have not been finalized and it should not necessarily effect selection specifically. The legislative intent was to provide positive economic impact, so that should be evaluated, along with social and biological impacts.

3. Bob Selk suggested that publicity and local promotion ability, local economic impact be criteria.
4. Steve Winters suggested that SMB culling not be permitted until after June 18 to protect spawning bass, indicating some interest to consider the potential biological impacts (although we need to evaluate the biological impacts). Mark Soletske did not agree, pointing specifically to the Sturgeon Bay Open as an appropriate tournament to study culling. There was some disagreement about the Sturgeon Bay open and when it is held.
5. Mike Hofmann suggested that at least 1 tournament be an event not normally held in Wisconsin. Steve Lindahl recommended two.
6. There was suggestion to spread the events across the state (geographic criteria).
7. There was concern about potential conflict of interest in selecting tournaments, indicating the need for specific guidelines and selection process.
8. Rough guidelines were discussed but no final decision was made. The guidelines suggested were:
  - **Size of the tournament (large)**
  - **At least 2 tournaments should be events that have previously not been held in Wisconsin and be of significant national stature (recognizable/professional).**
  - **The tournaments must be spread across the state.**

B. The Department will 'announce' the bass tournament pilot program and accept applications in writing to see how many applications are received. A November 1 deadline will be established. The FTAC will meet November 10 from 2-6 pm (details yet to be arranged).